

Ephesians 5:29–32 NLT

No one hates his own body but feeds and cares for it, just as Christ cares for the church. And we are members of his body. As the Scriptures say, “A man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one.” This is a great mystery, but it is an illustration of the way Christ and the church are one.

In *The Meaning of Marriage* by Timothy and Kathy Keller, the authors point out that in every culture in the world, in all recorded history, marriage has existed. For some reason, marriage has remained important to humans all over the globe, across time and space. While some would ask “why,” I suggest that an equally important question is “how?” How is it that despite age, gender differences, societal pressures, marriage is one of the few things that societies have universally stated as valuable? How have we managed to maintain marriages despite the barriers? One thing we know for certain: God created marriage as a picture of the relationship He wants with us. In the letter to the church at Ephesus, Paul reminds us that in the very beginning, God took two things which were separate and bound them together as one, calling them to work in unity and togetherness. The secret behind marriage, according to Paul, is that every marriage is supposed to show us how Jesus interacts with us. In doing so, we demonstrate how we should relate to one another—with humility, gentleness, patience, unity, and peace (Ephesians 4:1–3).

To be fair, we have sometimes painted this picture poorly. Therefore, we fight so hard to maintain unity at Shoreline City Church. The poisons of gossip, complaining, backbiting, discord, and division are not welcome here. Nor will they be tolerated. We understand that our relationships speak loudly about who Jesus is and who we are.



We want to live in a world that looks and feels like heaven, as much as we are able to make it so. As you pray, consider how to make your relationships feel as if they are a portrait and example of what heaven will be.

Prayer:

Father God, You have created marriage and relationships to help us tell your story. We pray that you would help us to remove the poisons of gossip, complaining, backbiting, discord, and division from our midst. Empower us by Your Holy Spirit to reflect Jesus' love and tell Your story.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

Additional Scriptures: Genesis 2:21–24 |
John 13:34–35 | Ephesians 4:1–3